

2024 Olympics

Equestrian Sports at Versailles Palace!

Site Preview

Jane Thery

Green Horse Enterprises, LLC



In March 2023, while traveling in France, I visited the site of the 2024 Olympic equestrian competitions: dressage, showjumping and eventing. This will be quite a spectacle as the dressage and show jumping will be held at the far end of the Grand Canal in the formal gardens of the Palace and the cross-country course will wend its way around the upper branches of the Grand Canal. With some inquiries and a long walk around the forthcoming Olympic site, I had the opportunity to see this amazing venue before the courses, stands, stabling, etc. are set up. Imagining how it will all look was great fun.



<https://www.paris2024.org/>

Welcome to Versailles!



The Palace of Versailles was built around what was a royal hunting lodge on the outskirts of Paris. Louis XIV, the Sun King, added royal apartments, formal gardens, entertainment halls and lavish décor and moved the court from Paris to Versailles in 1682. Until 1789, the Palace was the home of the royal courts of Louis XIV, Louis XV (great grandson of Louis XIV) and Louis XVI (beheaded along with Marie Antoinette in the French Revolution).



Gold is the dominant theme of the Palace. The formal gardens are in the quite structured French style with symmetrical beds, linear paths and beautiful fountains.



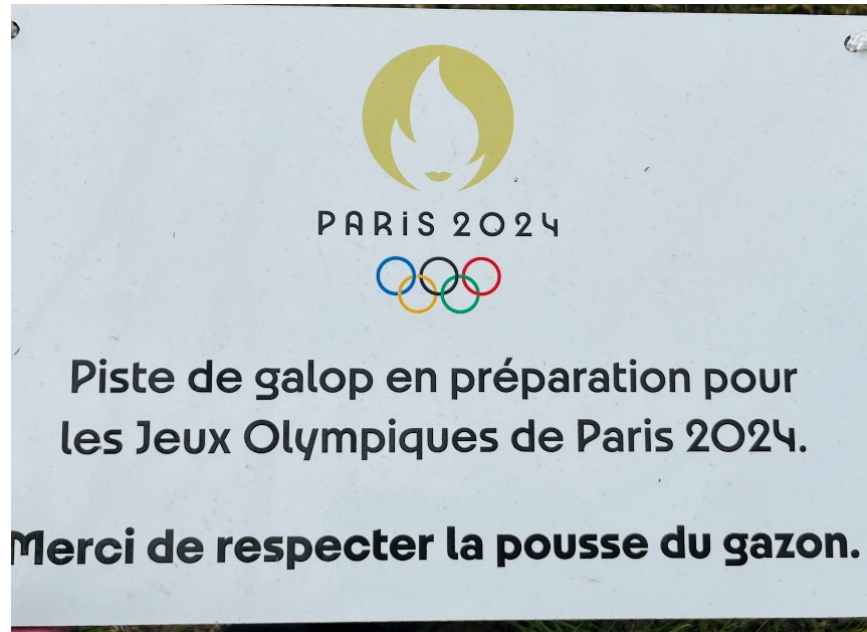
I learned that the jumping and dressage stadium would be at the very end of the Grand Canal in an area called the Etoile Royale. From the second-floor window of the Palace, you can see this area at the end of the artificial lake, the Grand Canal, in the distance.



The official rendition of how the stadium will look for dressage and jumping shows an open-air setting. The land rises up from the Grand Canal so the view back over the gardens to the Palace will be very impressive.



Next step was to find where the cross-country course would be. Walking around the Grand Canal (quite a hike), I saw some possible paths but couldn't confirm what they were until I came across the official sign. Yah!



The course will be down paths into the woods and along the edges of the Grand Canal. I could see where paths were marked or being cleared so I could get a rough idea of where the course will be but neither the exact path or the start and finish. My best guess is marked on the aerial view.



It looks like one of the most dramatic cross-country jumps will be at the head of the Grand Canal, right below the area of the Etoile Royale. The path is marked although the obstacle is not yet constructed.

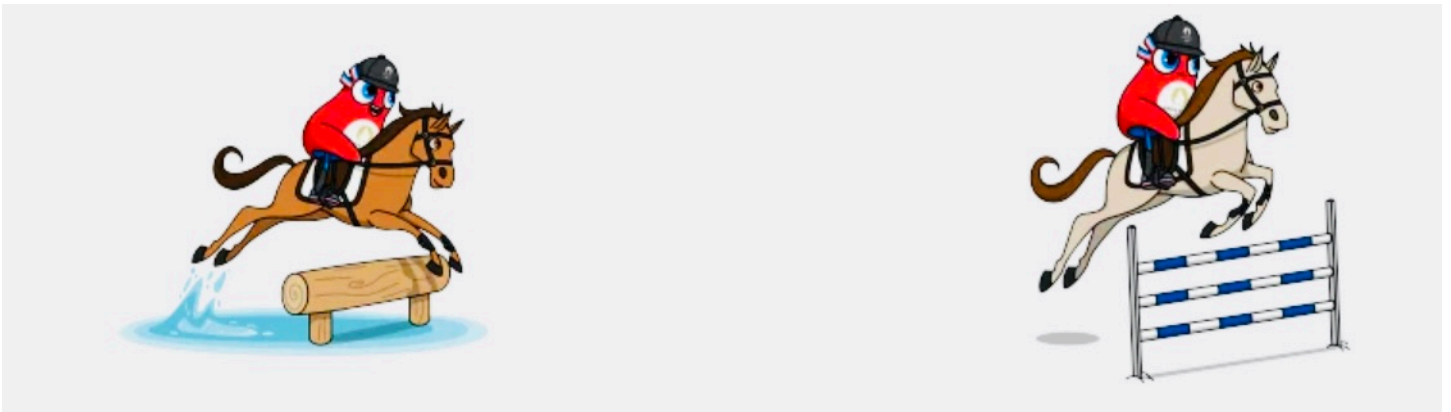


Galloping tracks along the edge of the Grand Canal and into the wood look beautiful. And new trail construction is under way!





On to Paris!









Disclaimer: This report is my informal touristic look at the planned Olympic venue for the equestrian sports. I have no affiliation with the event organizers.